



Lesson #5

What is Footwashing?



Scripture Reference: John 13:1-17



Goal: We follow Jesus' example of footwashing.

For the most part, children are well acquainted with the concept of being served. After all, someone prepares their food, washes their clothes, helps them with their homework... Someone is always doing something to meet their various needs. What they may not understand, however, is that Jesus calls upon them to help meet the needs of others. This lesson is designed to help the children explore Jesus' example of serving through the act of footwashing and how it relates to them. By taking part in the interactive activities listed, the students will also brainstorm other ways they can serve those around them.



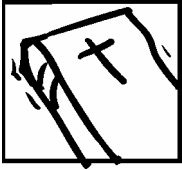
Opening Activity:

(For this activity, you will need two identical-size trays, a variety of plastic containers, and two chairs.)

Divide the children into two equal teams. If you have an odd number of students, one child will have to go twice. Have the two teams line up at one end of the classroom. At the opposite end, place two chairs a couple feet away from the wall. Give the first person on each team a tray holding half of the plastic

containers. These players must balance the trays on one hand waitress-style as they race across the room, around the chairs, and back to the starting line. Any player who drops anything must stop and pick it up before continuing. As each player gets back to the starting line, the tray is handed off to the next player in line. The first team to finish wins.

Say: **The game we just played is called Restaurant Relay*, because in it, we are balancing a tray of “food” in the same way a waitress or waiter would in a restaurant. When a waitress brings us our food, we say she is serving us. Serving someone food is only one type of service. There are many other ways to serve people, too. Today in our Bible lesson, we’ll be learning about a way Jesus served His disciples.**



Bible Experience:

(This activity consists of a monologue by a character known as “Agent #777”. You may dress in character and present the monologue yourself using the script provided below or find someone else who would be willing to do so.

If someone is dressing in character, you will need a trench coat, hat, dark glasses, walkie-talkie, and pocket-size Bible.

If you are dressing for the part, you may wish to arrange ahead of time for another adult to stay with your class while you get into costume.)

Gather the children together in front of the area from which the monologue will be presented.

Script

Come in dressed as a spy. Look around apprehensively. Talk into the walkie-talkie.

Yeah, Boss. Agent #777 here. I’m at the location You sent me to – the Church of God. You may insert your church name, town, and state here. What’s my mission for today? Oh, to tell the students here about an impossible mission Jesus did. Which one? Right – that one! Will do. Over and out.

Look around some more ,slip walkie-talkie into pocket, then walk over to the children. Speak to individual children for the first few sentences.

Hmmm...You're a bit on the smaller side. So are you. Stand up a minute. Yeah, I'd say you're rather short, too. You must be the students I've been sent to give a message, a message about Jesus.

We spies are famous for carrying out impossible missions. Jesus wasn't a spy, but He did some pretty impossible missions Himself while He was on the Earth. I'm here to tell you about one particular mission. Before I do that, I want to ask you a couple questions. When you grow up, what kind of job would you like to do? I mean, when I was young, I dreamed of being a spy, living a life of danger. Well, here I am, all grown up, Agent #777 at your service. What do you want to be when you're grown?

Responses. What's a job you would never want to do – what do you think is the worst job you could have? *Responses.*

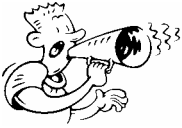
When Jesus lived on Earth, the worst job a person could have was to be a servant. Servants did many things, but one really awful job they had to do was wash people's feet! In Bible times, there weren't cars or paved roads or even sidewalks. If you wanted to go somewhere, you usually walked in the dirt to get there. And you most likely wore sandals, which meant your feet got very dirty. When you went to someone's house for supper, his servants would wash your feet. What a disgusting job!

One night as Jesus and His disciples were sitting down for supper, Jesus got up, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured some water into a large bowl, and began washing His disciples' feet. Now, you may be thinking, "What's so impossible about that?" You've got to remember, Jesus was God's Son – He was a King! Kings aren't supposed to serve other people. We're supposed to serve them!

But here was Jesus washing His disciples feet! Don't just take my word on it. *Pull out Bible and open to passage, but don't actually read it.* You can read about it in the Bible in the book of John, chapter 13, verses 1–17.

Why did He do it? He did it to show them how much He loved them, that He'd do anything for them. And He did it to show His disciples that He wanted them to serve others, too. What's more – Jesus loves us as much as He loved His disciples. He wants us to serve, to help each other, also.

Well, I need to get going now. I have to get to my next location and find out what mission awaits me there. So long... *Walk out of room.*



Life Application:

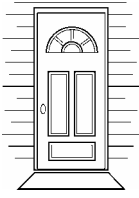
(For this activity, you will need a few basins of water, towels, and a Bible.)

Have the children gather their chairs into a circle. As they do this, randomly place the basins of water and towels around the inner side of the circle. Ask: **What was unusual about Jesus washing His disciples' feet? Why do you think He didn't just tell one of the disciples to do the job? What does it mean to serve others? Why is it important to serve others? Last week we talked about what an ordinance is. Who remembers what that word means? a special action Jesus did and told us to do also What ordinance did we learn about last week? In our denomination, we consider footwashing as an ordinance, also. The Bible tells us...Read John 13:12-15.**

Because Jesus told us to follow His example, we gather to wash each other's feet a couple times a year. We do this to help us remember that Jesus gave up being a King to come down to Earth to be a servant, so we could learn about God's love and forgiveness. We also do it to show that we are all created equal. No one is "better" than anyone else. We're all to serve each other. Today our class is going to practice footwashing.

Have the children choose partners. If there is an uneven number, pair yourself with a child. Otherwise, join with two children to form a trio. Any girls wearing tights or hose need not remove them; they'll dry quickly. You should go first to demonstrate for the class what is to be done. After you have washed a child's feet, invite the others to do the same. Don't be alarmed if they start giggling or talking. This is a new experience for them, one that may be a bit uncomfortable. But if it were comfortable, it wouldn't require humility on our parts.

When finished, ask: **How did you feel as you washed the other person's feet? How did you feel when your feet were being washed? Having someone wash our feet and washing someone else's feet may seem a little embarrassing, but we do it to follow Jesus' example. We do it to show Him that we're willing to love and serve others for Him.**



Closing Activity:

(For this activity, you will need a copy of the attached coupon sheet for each child, pencils, scissors, and a stapler or envelopes.)

Say: We've learned that Jesus wants us to serve others. One way He served His disciples was by washing their feet. What are some other ways Jesus served people? What are some other ways we can serve people? Who is someone you would like to serve this week? We're going to make some coupons today to be given in exchange for our services. In other words, our coupons will be for jobs we're willing to do without being paid to do them.

Show a sample coupon. Give each child a sheet of coupons to be completed. After writing in the individual jobs, have them cut the coupons apart. If they are all to be given to the same person, they may be stapled together into a booklet. However, if they are to go to different people, they may be placed in an envelope.

Before dismissing the children, briefly review the two ordinances covered thus far and tell them they'll be learning about the third ordinance next week.

*This game idea came from the ZOOM Web site at www.pbs.org.

Coupon Sheet

<p>This coupon is good for:</p> <p>It is a free gift from me to you to show God's love to you.</p> <p>Signed _____</p>	<p>This coupon is good for:</p> <p>It is a free gift from me to you to show God's love to you.</p> <p>Signed _____</p>
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